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UNCLAS KUWAIT 004455

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SUBJECT: KUWAITIS MAKE SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS ON REFERENDUM;
VISITING IRAQI SHI'A CLERIC PRAISES KUWAIT SUPPORT OF NEW
IRAQ

REF: KUWAIT 3498

1. (U) Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in remarks to the opening session of the National Assembly October 17, congratulated the Iraqi people on the Iraqi Constitution. The Kuwaiti Council of Ministers released a similar statement of support after its Sunday meeting. Before the vote, a senior MFA official briefed the press on Kuwait's support for continuing political process in Iraq, manifested by the referendum.

2. (U) Visiting Iraqi Shi'a cleric Al-Sayed Riyadh Al-Hakim, son of Ayatollah Al-Sayed Mohammed Saeed Al-Hakim, said that Kuwait is a model for the Arab world for its constructive dealings with Iraq. As reported in an English-language Daily Star on October 17, Al-Hakim explained that "Kuwaitis are the only Arabs who understand closely the suffering of the Iraqi people." Meanwhile, some Arab countries have played a negative role since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime by promoting divisions among the Iraqi people, he asserted. Al-Hakim, on his first public visit to Kuwait, voiced gratitude for Kuwait's donations to the victims of the Bridge of the Imams stampede (reftel) and the official support of the Iraqi electoral process. Al-Hakim commented that Kuwait set a positive example which should be followed by other Arab nations as it will lead to greater stability in Iraq and the region.

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